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Azaad Liadi Named Sun Belt Newcomer of the Year; Three Eagles Earn GS Men's Soccer Honors
Men's Soccer

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STATESBORO - Georgia Southern senior [Azaad Liadi](#) was named the 2019 Sun Belt Conference Men's Soccer Newcomer of the Year, highlighting Eagle honorees with the announcement of the league's annual awards on Tuesday.

In addition to his Newcomer of the Year honor, Liadi was one of three Eagles to earn spots on the 2019 All-Sun Belt Conference team. Senior defender [Gonzalo Talavera](#) and junior midfielder [Aldair Cortes](#) earned first-team honors, while Liadi was named to the second team as a forward.

Liadi joined the Eagles after a stellar three-year career at Saginaw Valley State and made an immediate impact up top for Georgia Southern this season. The Sterling Heights, Mich., native has three goals and one assist this season, and two of his goals were game-winners - at UAB on Sept. 24 and in the Eagles' 1-0 win over Appalachian State on Nov. 2. He also scored against Sun Belt regular season champion Central Arkansas while taking 30 shots this season, 15 on goal. He is the second Georgia Southern player to earn Sun Belt Newcomer of the Year honors over the last three seasons for Head Coach [John Murphy](#), joining [Javier Carbonell](#) (2017).

Talavera, meanwhile, earns a spot on the first team in 2019 after being a second-team All-Sun Belt selection a season ago. The Madrid, Spain, native is also a CoSIDA Academic All-District 4 honoree this season while putting the finishing touches on a fantastic career as an Eagle. Talavera has started 16 matches this season and 49 of 50 matches over his three-year career for Georgia Southern at center back. He will graduate this May with his bachelor's degree in business administration - management.

Cortes also earns first-team honors for the first time in his career after earning second-team honors, as well as Freshman of the Year honors, in 2017. This season, the Cairo, Ga., native has tallied five goals and two assists for 12 points, while delivering a pair of game-winning free kicks for the Eagles in the 80th minute or later - his free kick goal in the 89th minute defeated North Florida, 2-1, on Sept. 13 and his free kick in the 82nd minute downed Wofford, 3-2, on Oct. 4.

[Click here to view the complete 2019 Sun Belt Conference Men's Soccer Awards release.](#)

The Eagles open up action in the 2019 Sun Belt Conference Tournament on Wednesday as fourth-seeded Georgia Southern faces fifth-seeded Georgia State at 4 p.m. in Boone, N.C. It is the sixth straight season that Georgia Southern and Georgia State have met in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament.

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